IN 1922, A 16-YEAR-OLD BOY, DHYAN SINGH, ENLISTED IN THE FIRST BRAHMANS REGIMENT IN DELHI.

HERE YOU ARE... TWO PAIRS OF TROUSERS, SHIRTS,....

THE REGIMENT WAS KNOWN FOR ITS HOCKEY TEAM, AND SOON DHYAN WAS DRAWN INTO THE GAME.

PLAYED BEFORE?

HARDLY!

AS BOYS IN JHANSI, WE WOULD SOMETIMES HIT A BALL ALONG THE STREETS BUT NOT ALWAYS WITH HOCKEY STICKS!

I DON'T EVEN KNOW THE GAME WELL.

DHYAN HAD A FLAIR FOR THE GAME. AND THIS WAS SOON NOTED BY ONE OF HIS SUPERIORS, SUBEDAR-MAJOR BALE TIWARI, A HOCKEY ENTHUSIAST AND A FINE PLAYER HIMSELF.

YOU!

WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

DHYAN SINGH, SIR.

4

WITH TIWARI COACHING HIM, DHYAN'S NATURAL TALENT FOR THE GAME BEGAN TO FLOWER.

DON'T TRY TO SCORE WITH POWERFUL SHOTS! BREACH THE DEFENCE WITH PLACEMENTS AND PUSH STROKES!

AND THEN ONE DAY –

DHYAN, THE NAMES OF THOSE SELECTED TO PLAY IN THE ANNUAL TOURNAMENT HAVE BEEN PUT UP ON THE NOTICE BOARD!

THE ANNUAL MILITARY HOCKEY TOURNAMENT WAS AN EVENT THAT EVERYONE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO. HOCKEY TEAMS FROM DIFFERENT REGIMENTS PARTICIPATED AND THERE WAS KEEN RIVALRY.

DON'T WORRY, YOU'RE IN!

A FORTNIGHT LATER, DHYAN WAS PLAYING HIS FIRST BIG MATCH.

HE AND HIS TEAMMATES WON GAME AFTER GAME...

GOOOOAAALL...

...AND EMERGED VICTORIOUS!

WELL DONE, DHYAN SINGH! YOUR SECOND GOAL TURNED THE MATCH AROUND.

THANK YOU, SIR!

I'VE SEEN A STEADY IMPROVEMENT IN YOUR GAME DURING THE TOURNAMENT. STRAIGHTEN OUT THE KINKS AND YOU'LL GO FAR.
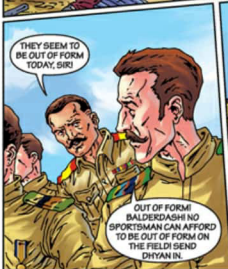
YES, SIR, THANK YOU, SIR!

9

ONE NIGHT, I HEARD HIM TALKING IN HIS SLEEP AND SUDDENLY HE SHOUTED: GOAL!

HA HA HA!

HERE HE COMES NOW.

WE SHOULD CALL YOU DHYAN CHAND INSTEAD OF DHYAN SINGH!

FINISHED PRACTISING, DHYAN?

DHYAN CHAND! DHYAN CHAND!

YOU'VE BECOME A REAL NIGHT OWL, HAVEN'T YOU?

SOON EVERYONE BEGAN TO CALL HIM THAT.

DHYAN TOOK PART IN ALL THE ARMY TOURNAMENTS. EVEN THE BRITISH OFFICERS OF THE REGIMENT REALISED THAT HE WAS A GIFTED PLAYER. ONCE, IN 1925, WHEN HIS REGIMENT WAS PLAYING IN THE PUNJAB INDIAN INFANTRY TOURNAMENT –

ANOTHER GOAL! WE'RE TWO DOWN! WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR BOYS?

DHYAN SINGH! WE'RE TWO DOWN AND THERE ARE ONLY FOUR MINUTES LEFT! DO SOMETHING!

THEY SEEM TO BE OUT OF FORM TODAY, SIR!

OUT OF FORM! BALDERDASH! NO SPORTSMAN CAN AFFORD TO BE OUT OF FORM ON THE FIELD! SEND DHYAN IN.

DHYAN WAS A SOLDIER AND HE COULD NOT DISOBEY AN ORDER!

GETTING HOLD OF THE BALL, HE PILOTED IT DOWN THE FIELD, ZIG-ZAGGING PAST PLAYER AFTER PLAYER...

AND THEN –

...TILL HE WAS IN SIGHT OF THE GOAL.

WHAM

GOAL!!!

IN THE NEXT TWO MINUTES, HE SLAMMED IN ANOTHER GOAL.

13

AND JUST BEFORE THE FINAL WHISTLE –

HE'S DONE IT! WE'VE WON!

YOU'RE A WIZARD, MY BOY, A HOCKEY WIZARD! THERE'S NO ONE LIKE YOU!

THREE CHEERS FOR DHYAN CHAND!

14

ONE DAY IN MARCH, 1926 –

WHAT'S GOING ON? WHAT'S ALL THE EXCITEMENT ABOUT?

THE ARMY IS SENDING A HOCKEY TEAM TO NEW ZEALAND TO PLAY AGAINST CIVILIAN TEAMS THERE!

YOU STAND A GOOD CHANCE, DHYAN. BUT YOU MUST GET ONE OF THE ENGLISH OFFICERS TO SPEAK FOR YOU.

EVERYBODY KNOWS YOU'RE GOOD AT HOCKEY, BUT THESE PEOPLE WON'T SEND A FELLOW LIKE YOU WHO HAS ONLY STUDIED UP TO SIXTH STANDARD!

THAT'S WHY I SAY, TALK TO A BRITISH OFFICER!

DHYAN WAS SHY AND RETICENT BY NATURE, AND NOT ONE TO ASK ANYBODY FOR FAVOURS.

ALL THE OFFICERS KNOW MY GAME. IF I'M GOOD ENOUGH, THEY'RE SURE TO GIVE ME A CHANCE.

...AND THE MOMENT THE OFFICER HAD TURNED HIS BACK...

...RAN TO HIS BARRACKS...

...TO BREAK THE NEWS TO HIS FRIENDS.

I'M GOING TO NEW ZEALAND!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!
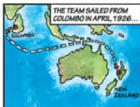
WELL DONE, DHYAN!

DHYAN CHAND ZINDABAD!*

HIS FELLOW SOLDIERS, SOME OF WHOM WOULD BE HIS TEAMMATES, WERE OVERJOYED.

*LONG LIVE, DHYAN CHAND

18

HIS FATHER, A SUBEDAR IN THE ARMY, AND HIS MOTHER FELT PROUD OF THEIR SON, BUT THERE WERE WORRIES.

WHAT ARE YOU TWO WHISPERING ABOUT?

SON, YOU'LL NEED CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND TOWELS AND BED SHEETS....

EVERYTHING WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE REGIMENT, MOTHER!

ARE YOU SURE?

YES, FATHER, YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING!

DHYAN AND HIS BROTHERS WERE USED TO HARDSHIPS AND DEPRIVATION. THEIR FATHER'S MEAGRE SALARY AND CONSTANT TRANSFERS KEPT THE FAMILY ON EDGE ALL THE TIME. FOR HIS FIRST TRIP ABROAD, DHYAN MADE DO WITH THE KIT PROVIDED BY THE ARMY.

19

THE TEAM SAILED FROM COLOMBO IN APRIL, 1926...

...AND REACHED NEW ZEALAND IN EARLY MAY.

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME A SPORTS TEAM FROM INDIA WAS TOURING A FOREIGN COUNTRY!

THERE WERE FIVE SIKHS IN THE INDIAN TEAM. THE NEW ZEALANDERS WERE FASCINATED BY THEIR HEADGEAR AND THE WAY THE VISITORS PLAYED HOCKEY.

THEY'RE SO FAST AND THEIR STICK WORK IS SPLENDID!

THEY MAKE OUR BOYS LOOK LIKE CLUMSY OAFS IN COMPARISON!

SAW THAT! THAT SMALL MAN TOOK THE BALL RIGHT ACROSS THE FIELD DODGING ALL OUR BOYS IN HIS PATH!

THAT'S ONE OF THEIR BEST PLAYERS.

DAN CHANDI

DHYAN CHAND

THE INDIANS PLAYED 21 MATCHES IN NEW ZEALAND, WINNING 18, DRAWING 2 AND LOSING 1. DHYAN SHOT OVER A HUNDRED OF THE 192 GOALS SCORED BY THE INDIANS DURING THE TOUR. IN CONTRAST, THE NEW ZEALANDERS SCORED ONLY 24 GOALS.

THE INDIANS WON THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF THE NEW ZEALANDERS. ONCE, AFTER A MATCH AT NEW PLYMOUTH —

EXCUSE ME, MR CHAND, MAISIE AND I SAW YOU PLAY AT AUCKLAND AND WE WERE AMAZED BY YOUR CONTROL OVER THE BALL!

THE WAY YOU TOOK THE BALL PAST PLAYER AFTER PLAYER LEFT US BREATHLESS!

WE WANTED TO SEE YOU PLAY AGAIN SO WE FOLLOWED YOUR TEAM HERE!

UH... THANK YOU, MADAM!

YOUNG DHYAN AND HIS TEAMMATES, SIMPLE VILLAGE BOYS THAT THEY WERE, SOMETIMES FELT ILL AT EASE WITH THE PRAISE AND HONOURS HEAPED ON THEM AND THE ATTENTION GIVEN TO THEM BY THE LOCAL PEOPLE AND THE PRESS.

21

THE FIRST-EVER INDIAN SPORTS TEAM TO TOUR ABROAD RETURNED HOME AFTER NEARLY THREE MONTHS... COVERED IN GLORY!

THAT'S HIM! THAT'S DHYAN CHAND!

DHYAN CHAND'S EXPLOITS ON THE HOCKEY FIELDS OF NEW ZEALAND HAD BEEN REPORTED IN THE INDIAN PRESS AND THE TEAM'S HOMECOMING FOCUSED ATTENTION ON HIM. BEFORE THE TOUR, DHYAN CHAND WAS VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN OUTSIDE ARMY CIRCLES.

THE TOUR BROUGHT HIM TO THE ATTENTION OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC. SOON AFTERWARDS, HE WAS PROMOTED TO LANCE NAIK.

MEANWHILE, IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS HAD BEEN TAKING PLACE IN INDIAN HOCKEY. IN SEPTEMBER, 1925, IN GWALIOR –

THE BRITISH INTRODUCED US TO HOCKEY.

FOR A LONG TIME IT WAS PLAYED ONLY IN ARMY CAMPS...

...BUT GRADUALLY IT MOVED OUT OF THE CANTONMENTS AND BECAME POPULAR WITH CIVILIANS.

THE BENGAL HOCKEY ASSOCIATION WAS FORMED IN 1908. NOW THERE ARE TWO MORE ASSOCIATIONS.

AND MORE ARE LIKELY TO BE FORMED. BUT WHAT HOCKEY IN INDIA NEEDED WAS A CENTRAL GOVERNING BODY.

AND NOW WE HAVE ONE! THE INDIAN HOCKEY FEDERATION WITH THE DYNAMIC COL BRUCE TURNBULL AS PRESIDENT...

...AND THE HONOURABLE N.H. ANSARI AS SECRETARY WILL TAKE HOCKEY FORWARD IN INDIA.

TWO YEARS LATER, THE INDIAN HOCKEY FEDERATION BECAME A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOCKEY FEDERATION AND GAINED INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION.

IT WAS AN EXCITING TIME FOR ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN HOCKEY.

DHYAN, THERE IS TALK THAT HOCKEY MAY BE INCLUDED AS ONE OF THE GAMES OF THE AMSTERDAM OLYMPICS!

IF INDIA SENDS A TEAM, YOU HAVE A GOOD CHANCE OF GETTING A BERTH!

BUT WOULD THE I.H.F. INCLUDE AN ARMY MAN IN THEIR TEAM?

YOU THINK SO?

WHY NOT? THE I.H.F. IS CONTROLLED BY ARMY MEN!

ITS PRESENT PRESIDENT IS MAJOR BURN-MURDOCH SAHIB, WHO IS A HOCKEY LOVER. HE MAY EVEN SEND AN ARMY TEAM!

THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION DID FINALLY DECIDE TO INCLUDE HOCKEY AS ONE OF THE SPORTS OF THE GAMES. THE I.H.F. ANNOUNCED A HOCKEY TOURNAMENT TO IDENTIFY PLAYERS FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM. THE TOURNAMENT WAS HELD BETWEEN THE TEAMS OF FIVE PROVINCES – BENGAL, UNITED PROVINCES, CENTRAL PROVINCES, RAJPUTANA AND PUNJAB.

I'VE HEARD YOU'VE BEEN LOANED TO THE U.P. TEAM, DHYAN.

YES, PERHAPS BECAUSE I WAS BORN IN ALLAHABAD IN U.P.

I'M A BIT APPREHENSIVE ABOUT PLAYING WITH CIVILIANS. I'VE ALWAYS PLAYED IN ARMY TEAMS SO FAR.

YOU'LL BE FINE! YOU'RE TOO MODEST, DHYAN. YOU DON'T KNOW YOUR OWN WORTH.

ANY TEAM WOULD BE THRILLED TO HAVE YOU ON THEIR SIDE. I WILL TREAT YOU LIKE ROYALTY!

24

DHYAN CHAND

DHYAN CHAND CERTAINLY HAD NO TROUBLE BONDING WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE U.P. TEAM. IT SOON BECAME CLEAR THAT ON THE FIELD, HE WAS THE PIVOT AROUND WHICH THE REST OF THE TEAM REVOLVED.

ONLY THE PUNJAB TEAM, CAPTAINED BY ERIC PINNIGER, SHOWED SOME ABILITY TO STAND UP TO U.P.'S AGGRESSIVE PLAY.

BUT U.P. OUSTED PUNJAB IN THE SEMI-FINAL AND THEN OVERRAN RAJPUTANA IN THE FINAL TO WIN THE FIRST-EVER NATIONAL HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP.

25

19 FEBRUARY, 1928, WAS THE DAY WHEN THE TEAM FOR THE OLYMPICS WOULD BE ANNOUNCED. NONE OF HIS TEAMMATES COULD SLEEP THE PREVIOUS NIGHT BUT DHYAN CHAND, DISCIPLINED BY HIS ARMY TRAINING, WAS SOON SNORING AWAY.

LOOK AT HIM! NOT A CARE IN THE WORLD!

HE KNOWS HE'S SURE TO BE SELECTED.

YOU, CHAND, SEAMAN AND FEROZE ARE THE SPEARHEAD OF OUR ATTACK.

THE SELECTION WILL BE DONE BY MAJOR BURN-MURDOCH SAHIB AND COLONEL HILL SAHIB. BOTH ARMY MEN, SO GORAS AND ARMY MEN HAVE THE BEST CHANCE.

IF HE IS, YOU TOO WILL MAKE IT, MARTHINS.

13 PLAYERS WERE SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF THEIR PERFORMANCE AT THE TOURNAMENT. DHYAN CHAND WAS ONE OF THEM. THE TEAM WAS TO GO TO AMSTERDAM VIA ENGLAND, WHERE THEY WOULD BE JOINED BY THREE INDIAN PLAYERS WHO WERE STUDYING AT OXFORD...
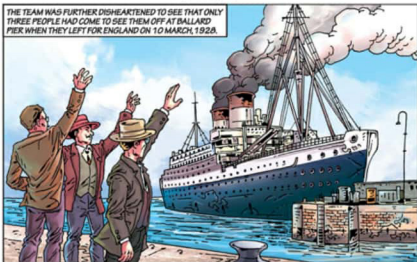
I HOPE THEY ARE RIGHT! GOING BY FORM, I SHOULD BE SELECTED BUT ONE NEVER KNOWS!

... JAIPAL SINGH (CAPTAIN), PATAUDI SR. AND S.M. YUSUF THE TEAM WAS TO LEAVE FOR AMSTERDAM BY SHIP FROM BOMBAY*. WHILE IN BOMBAY, THE TEAM PLAYED AGAINST BOMBAY XI AND LOST 3-2! DHYAN SHOT BOTH THE GOALS FOR HIS SIDE.

IS THIS THE SIDE THAT'S GOING TO REPRESENT US?

THEY MIGHT AS WELL HAVE SENT THE BOMBAY XI!

*NOW CALLED MUMBAI

26

THE TEAM WAS FURTHER DISHEARTENED TO SEE THAT ONLY THREE PEOPLE HAD COME TO SEE THEM OFF AT BALLARD PIER WHEN THEY LEFT FOR ENGLAND ON 10 MARCH, 1928.

IT WAS GOOD OF MAJOR BURN SAHIB AND THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF I.H.F., CHARLES NEWHAM, TO COME TO SEE US OFF!

AND THE JOURNALIST BHATTACHARYA... HE'S FROM THE TIMES OF INDIA, I THINK

BURN-MURDOCH WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION TO HOCKEY IN INDIA. IT WAS HE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SENDING AN ARMY HOCKEY TEAM TO NEW ZEALAND IN 1926 OF WHICH I WAS A MEMBER.

THE SHIP TOUCHED TILBURY DOCKS NEAR LONDON ON A COLD, MISTY MORNING IN MARCH.

THEY WERE MET BY JAIPAL SINGH AND S.M. YUSUF.

WELCOME TO BLIGHTY,* BOYS!

YOU MUST BE DHYAN CHAND. I'VE HEARD A LOT ABOUT YOU!

WE'LL BE PLAYING ELEVEN MATCHES IN ENGLAND. THE TOUR WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND EUROPEAN HOCKEY AND FIELD CONDITIONS AND MOST IMPORTANT...

...IT'LL HELP US UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S GAME AND WELD US INTO A STRONG, UNITED TEAM!

NOW LET'S GO TO YOUR HOTEL!

JAIPAL WAS WELL-KNOWN IN BRITISH HOCKEY CIRCLES AS HE PLAYED FOR THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY TEAM. HE WAS THE FIRST INDIAN STUDENT TO BE CONFERRED 'THE OXFORD BLUE' IN HOCKEY. JAIPAL WAS AN ADIVASI BELONGING TO THE MUNDA TRIBE. AFTER HIS RETURN TO INDIA, HE WORKED HARD FOR THE UPLIFTMENT OF TRIBALS AND FOUNDED A PARTY THAT SPEARHEADED THE MOVEMENT FOR THE FORMATION OF JHARKHAND STATE.

* BRITISH SLANG FOR BRITAIN. DERIVED FROM 'VILAYAT' WHICH MEANS BRITISH.

28

THE TEAM SPENT A MONTH IN ENGLAND, SIGHTSEEING.

YOU WANT TO SEE TRAFALGAR SQUARE?

THAT WAY! GO THAT WAY!

IT WAS THE FIRST TIME ANY OF THE PLAYERS HAD BEEN TO ENGLAND AND THEY WERE THRILLED AND EXCITED BY THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF LONDON.

THE BRITISH PRESS DID NOT PAY MUCH ATTENTION TO THE INDIAN VISITORS. THE MATCHES THEY PLAYED WERE THINLY ATTENDED, EXCEPT FOR THE FOLKESTONE FESTIVAL HOCKEY MATCH THAT DREW ALMOST A THOUSAND SPECTATORS.

FOR THIS MATCH, THE HOSTS FIELDED THEIR STRONGEST TEAM WHICH INCLUDED NINE INTERNATIONAL PLAYERS. IT WAS IN FACT, BRITAIN'S NATIONAL TEAM.

THE SPECTATORS, NATURALLY ROOTING FOR THEIR HOME TEAM, WATCHED IN HORROR AS THE INDIAN FORWARDS, LED BY DHYAN CHAND, PENETRATED THE BRITISH DEFENCE, TIME AND AGAIN...

...TO SLAM IN FOUR GOALS! THE BRITISH TEAM FAILED TO SCORE.

BRITISH HOCKEY OFFICIALS WATCHED GRIMLY FROM THE PAVILION. THE BRITISH WERE WORLD HOCKEY CHAMPIONS AT THAT TIME AND THE PATHETIC DISPLAY BY THE HOME SIDE SHOCKED AND DISMAYED THE OFFICIALS.

I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD SEND A TEAM TO THE OLYMPICS!

YOU MEAN...

DID YOU SEE HOW THEY DANCED AROUND OUR BOYS? WE CAN'T RISK BEING DEFEATED BY A SIDE FROM ONE OF OUR BLASTED COLONIES!

DHYAN CHAND

LEAVING AS QUIETLY AND UNOBTRUSIVELY AS THEY HAD COME...

...THE INDIANS ARRIVED IN AMSTERDAM ON 14 APRIL, 1928.

THE DUTCH WERE CURIOUS BUT FRIENDLY.

31

POLITE FRIENDLINESS TURNED TO ADMIRATION WHEN THE INDIANS, IN THEIR FIRST MATCH WITH A DUTCH TEAM, AMSTERDAM XI, TROUNCED THEIR HOSTS 24-6!!

THEY WERE INVITED TO PLAY IN GERMANY AND BELGIUM WHERE THEY WON EVERY MATCH. SO WHEN THEY ARRIVED AT THE OLYMPISCH STADION* FOR THEIR FIRST OLYMPIC ENCOUNTER ON 17 MAY, THEY WERE CHARGED UP AND RARING TO GO. TEAM MANAGER, ROSSER, GAVE THEM A PEP TALK BEFORE THEIR FIRST GAME WITH AUSTRIA.

WE'VE COME THOUSANDS OF MILES TO PLAY HERE AND MANY BACK HOME THINK THIS IS A WASTED TRIP!

SO LET'S SHOW THEM WHAT WE CAN DO!!

*OLYMPIC STADIUM IN AMSTERDAM

32